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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JUNE 10, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of a bomb blast at the five-star hotel, Pearl Continental in Peshawar killing 11 people dominated headlines in all newspapers on Wednesday. All newspapers also highlighted report that the "20 militants were killed in an operation in the frontier region of Bannu district" that was launched against tribesmen for their failure to handover kidnappers of the Razmak Cadet College students. Security forces' claim that "14 militants had been killed in Peuchar area of Swat" during the ongoing military offensive received extensive coverage. Some major dailies highlighted U.S. Intelligence Agency Director Dennis Blair's remarks that "Pakistan Army is gaining in its offensive against extremists in Swat, because public support for the operation is solidifying." Foreign Minister Qureshi's remarks that "U.S. troop surge can destabilize Pakistan" received prominent display.

Most major dailies ran editorials on the safe return of IDPs and the ongoing military offensive against Taliban militants. Commenting on the IDP's disillusionment with the government, the prestigious English daily, "Dawn," wrote: "it is essential that the military battle is followed by tangible steps towards civic development and economic uplift of devastated zones and the rehabilitation of the displaced." The centrist national English daily "The News," observed that the "possibility of a Taliban return to Swat will continue to hover in the air until the news comes in of Fazlullah's capture, or his body is brought to Imam Dehri." The second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," advised that "instead of begging for \$1.35 billion, the government should seek America's help for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"11 Killed In PC Peshawar Bombing" "The News" (06/10)

"At least 11 persons, including foreigners, were killed and over 50 others injured when a huge blast ripped through the city's lone five-star Pearl Continental Hotel - adjoining the residence of the Corps Commander Peshawar - after an exchange of heavy fire between the terrorists and security personnel on Tuesday night. Those sustaining injuries included ANP's Provincial Minister Zarshed Khan, Senator Nabi Bangash, women, UN officials, three foreigners and an airlines' crew. A large number of vehicles parked in the parking bay, a mosque, shops inside the hotel, banks and other outlets were completely destroyed."

"20 Militants Killed In FR Bannu" "The News" (06/10)

"Security forces on Tuesday launched an operation against the Bakakhel and Janikhel tribesmen in the Frontier Region (FR) of Bannu district for their failure to hand over the kidnappers of the Razmak Cadet College students and teachers. There were reports that 20 militants were killed and several others injured in the operation."

"Forces Kill 14 Taliban In Swat" "The News" (06/10)

"Security forces on Tuesday killed 14 more militants in Peuchar area of Swat during the ongoing military operation. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the security forces conducted a search operation around Peuchar Valley."

"Fazlullah's HQ Destroyed" "The Nation" (06/10)

"The security forces have destroyed Maulana Fazlullah's headquarters in Imam Dheri. According to sources, the security forces planted IEDs at the headquarters and cleared the area before blowing up the headquarters. It is noted that the Imam Dheri headquarters which was constructed near River Swat was the centre of all militancy activities by Fazlullah."

"Pak Army Gaining On Public Support: U.S. Spy Chief; Pentagon Offers Assistance For Operation" "The News" (06/10)

"The Pakistan Army is gaining in its offensive against extremists in the Swat Valley because public support for the operation is solidifying, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair told an audience of intelligence professionals in Washington on Monday night, while the Pentagon offered to provide assistance to Pakistani military for the successful completion of the operation."

"U.S. Troops Surge Can Destabilize Pakistan, Says Qureshi" "Daily Times" (06/10)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said the U.S. move to send 21,000 extra troops to war-ravaged Afghanistan could have serious implications for Pakistan, he told a news conference with his Turkish counterpart in Islamabad on Tuesday."

"Lashkar Secures Four Villages" "Dawn" (06/10)

"An anti-Taliban tribal Lashkar secured four villages and killed 13 militants in Upper Dir. Helicopter gunships pounded militants' hideouts in Doog Darra to support a Lashkar which engaged militants Shatkas and Ghazigay villages and was facing stiff resistance from them."

"TNSM Swat Chief Held In Peshawar" "Daily Times" (06/10)

"Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) Swat Chief, Iqbal Khan who belongs to Matta area of Swat and two other suspects were arrested from Peshawar's Hayatabad area on Tuesday, sources said."

"Key TNSM Leader, Taliban Supporter Surrenders" "The News" (06/10)

"A prominent supporter of the banned Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and an important leader of the outlawed Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) Maulana Waliullah Kabalgrami surrendered to the security forces in Thakot area of Kohistan district on Tuesday, sources said."

"President And Patterson Discuss IDPs" "Daily Times," "The News" (06/10)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday hosted a lunch for the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson. President's spokesman Farhatullah Babar said 'issues ranging from the rehabilitation of IDPs, the current drive against the Taliban and the need for greater international assistance in relief efforts were also discussed.'"

"Senators Want Backing For Security Forces" "Daily Times" (06/10)

"Senators from both the opposition and treasury benches on Tuesday called for unity against extremism to obtain a decisive victory against the Taliban, warning that unless the masses supported the

security forces, the country could collapse into civil war."

"Lingering Operation Worries NWFP Government" "The News" (06/10)

"The NWFP government is getting impatient with the lingering military operation in Swat and prolonged stay of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps. 'The government wants rapid conclusion to the action fearing snowballing of the IDP problem into widespread protests in face of the rising mercury and drying out of the available finances with the displaced people,' said a senior officer of the provincial government on Tuesday."

"Congress To Approve Funds For Pakistan: White House" "The News" (06/10)

"The White House has expressed confidence in getting congressional approval for a \$100 billion Afghanistan and Iraq wars spending bill also containing funds to assist Pakistan meet its 'critical needs' in economic, humanitarian and security areas, Press Secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters on Monday afternoon."

"Gates Seeks \$700 Million For Pakistan" "The News" (06/10)

"U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates on Tuesday sought congressional support for \$700 million for Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund for the fiscal year 2010 as part of a massive \$130 billion request for overseas contingency operations for Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, appearing jointly with the Defence Secretary, said Pakistan is crucial to the U.S. success in Afghanistan. One key approach in the near term is to help Pakistan's military to improve its overall 'and specifically its counterinsurgency' capabilities."

"U.S. Backs Resumption Of Indi-Pak Talks" "The News" (06/10)

"The Obama administration on Tuesday fully favored resumption of Pakistan-India dialogue for improvement in their bilateral relations and establishment of peace in the region, spokesman Ian Kelly said at the daily briefing."

"U.S., Not Taliban, Fanning Militancy" "Dawn" (06/10)

"The government must give a timeframe for the Swat operation so that 3.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) could return to their homes. Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Amir Syed Munawar Hasan demanded this at a press conference in Bahawalpur on Tuesday. He also spent a good deal of time on criticizing the U.S. for 'interfering in Pakistan's affairs' and India for creating troubles for Pakistan. Mr. Hussain said NATO forces and not the Taliban were putting Pakistani nukes' security at risk."

"The United States Launches \$75 Million Pre-Service Teachers Education Program (Pre-STEP) In Sindh" "The Post," "The Statesman" (06/10)

"The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) along with the Sindh's Ministry of Education and Literacy officially launched the Pre-Service Teacher Education Program (Pre-STEP) in Sindh. The Pre-STEP program is designed to improve the quality of basic education in Pakistan by strengthening teachers' education and skills. The program will directly impact new and practicing teachers by helping them to gain revised and upgraded teaching qualifications. The \$75 million, five-year program will fund training throughout the entire province."

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Editorials/Op-eds

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"IDPs' Disillusionment," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/10)

"For a population disillusioned with the government can become part of anti-state or militant groups in the future. The more than two million displaced by the fighting are most at risk, for the state has done little to mitigate their suffering.... Refugees can be easily radicalized. The failure of the state and its institutions

to protect, accommodate and later rehabilitate them (IDPs) increases the anger of millions, as does the rejection of their presence in Sindh and Punjab by political groups. This can well create recruiting space for militant outfits. For long-term success in the battle against the Taliban and other anti-state forces, it is essential that the military battle is followed by tangible steps towards civic development and economic uplift of devastated zones and the rehabilitation of the displaced."

"Safe Return of IDPs," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/10)

"Calls of repatriation made without ensuring that a particular troubled area has been fully cleared of the insurgents, and that there was no likelihood of their return, would prove counterproductive. They might result in uprooting the people for the second time. If that were to happen, it would make it doubly difficult for the authorities to convince the IDPs to go back to their homes at a later stage when the danger had really passed.... However, Monday's events - the blowing up of bridges, a school and a college - showed that the Taliban fighters had not been entirely pushed out of Buner. They were either present in certain pockets or hiding in the garb of ordinary citizens. Thus, although the troops have made gains in the area it was not safe enough for peaceful residents to live."

"Early Return Of IDPs Should Be Ensured," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (06/10)

"In view of the Army Chief's directive for the return of IDP's to their homes in Swat, it is expected that all the concerned departments will work towards the goal.... Newspaper advertisements announcing head money for Maulvi Fazal Ullah and his important associates show that the security organizations do not have a clue about the wanted people even after a moth long operation. This means that the Tehrik-i-Taliban leadership is safe so far and the Tehrik can resurface after operation ends.... It is imperative that the government implements its promise of Nizam-e-Adl in Malakand Division.... The people of Swat will be disappointed if the promise was not fulfilled and yet another movement for the enforcement of Shariah would be unstoppable."

"Across The Border?," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/10)

"The possibility of a Taliban return to Swat will continue to hover in the air until the news comes in of Fazlullah's capture, or his body is brought to Imam Dehri. We had previously pointed out that the links between militancy in Afghanistan and Pakistan could impede this; that key leaders could escape across the border to get away from growing heat from the army. This indeed is what has happened now.... Pakistan's all-out effort to tackle the Taliban needs to be supported by a similar effort in Kabul. One would expect the Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke to spend a little more time on this key strategic area, rather than focusing on our courts, the chief justice and other matters that have nothing at all to do with the U.S."

"Kashmir Dispute, World Community And Government Obligation," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/10)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has fully backed the right to self determination of the Kashmiri people, saying that the right was guaranteed in the UN resolutions on Kashmir. He was talking to Kashmiri American Council Executive Director Ghulam Nabi Fai.... Instead of begging for \$1.35 billion, the government should seek America's help for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The government should remind [the U.S. administration] that President Obama had admitted during his election campaign the need for the Kashmir dispute resolution for lasting peace in the region. Why doesn't he pay attention to the fact he himself had stated?"

"State Of Taliban Aggression," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/10)

"Disenchantment is setting in among the latter-day Taliban who

joined Baitullah's enterprise simply to fulfill their dreams of a 'pure Islam' to transform society into some sort of imagined utopia. After perceiving that the Taliban were on the run, a Taliban chief in Peshawar has also denounced Baitullah's policies.... Baitullah's boasting about how his Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is going to spread the warfront and take the fight into Punjab and Sindh is being put to the test of reality.... This is not to downplay the capacity of the TTP to stage aggression. As it retreats in the face of the military operation, more spectacular events should be expected. The war is for the long haul and Pakistan cannot afford to become complacent about its ability to tackle the likes of Baitullah Mehsud."

"Lashkars Should Not Be Permanent Phenomenon," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/10)

"The precedent set up by the people of Upper Dir would hopefully encourage people of other areas to stand up against militants who have disrupted normal life.... However, we would also caution that Lashkars must not be a permanent phenomenon as presence of organized militias, armed with weapons, is fraught with serious consequences in the long run. With the passage of time they could pose another challenge to the Government and, therefore, should be used only as a tool to defeat militants."

"Support From Lashkars," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (06/10)

"The government's policy to defeat the Taliban once and for all seems to have borne some fruit as it has been able to win the support of the tribesmen in the form of lashkars to bring and ensure peace in the troubled areas.... While we do not exactly know the U.S. reaction to it, at that time, the tribesmen's push to flush the Uzbeks and others out of their areas seemed to have a wink and a nod from the U.S., which was previously opposed to the deals with tribesmen.... The passion of the local lashkars is a reflection of the sentiment of the whole nation that wants the terrorists to be dealt a severe blow."

"The Final Blow," an op-ed by Farooq Hameed Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/10)

"While the Taliban's command, control, communication and training network have been more or less destroyed in Swat valley, the fact that the top Taliban leadership and remaining militants have scattered into the mountains or moved to adjoining areas gives them the ability to regroup at a later stage. To prevent the militants' re-emergence, the momentum of Operation Rah-i-Rast must be maintained to keep up the hot pursuit till their total elimination or surrender including the top leadership.... With the Taliban myth shattered and the stunning fight back by the local Lashkar in upper Dir, such armed uprisings need to be encouraged in other areas to help isolate and wipe out the remaining militants.... The operation must continue till all military objectives are fully achieved and lasting peace and security are ensured."

"Military Operation and the Fallout in Lower Dir," an op-ed by Nasim Zehra in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/10)

"There is an appreciation that the operation may have brought destruction but there is hope that it may bring peace and security in the region. Irrespective of what news may trickle out from either the Taliban or the army the fact is that the battle for Kalpani post and the control of the Qambar-Timergarah road still rages. Indeed reports suggest that the battle will be over soon. It is unlikely that a definitive answer is in the offing. The counterinsurgency strategy is a tough one to implement."

"Enduring Democracy And Supremacy Of Parliament," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (06/10)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has once again given the assurance that Taliban can't take over Pakistani nuclear weapons. However, he said that anything could happen if democracy failed and in such an eventuality Taliban could lay their hands on nuclear assets.... The

apprehensions President Asif Zardari expressed vis-`-vis nuclear assets, could be addressed through strong and durable democracy.... If the government really wants strong democracy in the country, then it should recognize the supremacy of the parliament and block the way of interference in its authority."

"The Endgame Target: A Weak Nuclear Defanged Pakistan," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/10)

"One expects external detractors to play the anti-Pakistan nuke game.... There is a two-pronged strategy that is now becoming obvious in relation to Pakistan's nukes: externally the drummed-up scare over our command and control - despite the fact that it is the U.S. that has revealed the disarray of its own command and control - and internally using local critics of Pakistan's nuclear weapons to sow doubts regarding the relevancy of atomic weapons (although if this was the case why the U.S. is pursuing a program for mini-nukes, etc) and to create a falsehood that such a capability is a liability for Pakistan. Why is there such renewed attention on our nukes?... No wonder our foreign detractors are desperate to gain access at all costs."

"America's Double Standards And World Peace," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (06/10)

"The difference between words and deeds of the American administration has once again come to fore. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has targeted Iran in a TV interview, saying that Israel and Arab world have concern over Iran's nuclear program. This statement has come only few days after President Obama's address to the Islamic world in which he talked of increasing harmony between civilizations.... Iran never claimed that its nuclear program has any aggressive designs against anyone. Iran has always said that it is acquiring nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, which is the right of every nation."

"In Cairo, A Small Step Forward," an op-ed by Mahir Ali in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/10)

"Although it would be fatuous to deny that the scope for skepticism about the likelihood of constructive change in the Middle East has only marginally been diminished by Obama's carefully crafted and eloquently delivered peroration, there is now at least a glimmer of hope where none existed before. And, furthermore, no one in the audience deemed it appropriate to fling their footwear at the President of the United States."

"Obama: Reaching Out To Muslims," a letter to the Editor by Mehnaz Siddiqui in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/10)

"Although his (Obama) speech contained no new policy proposals, yet it was a welcome gesture and some sort of realization, of course, a belated one. It was, to me, one of the most important speeches ever delivered by a U.S. President for making a serious effort for reaching out to Muslims; healing rifts between the U.S. and the Muslim world and for changing the explosive political climate."

"Can Obama Work A Miracle?," an op-ed by Mazhar Qayyum Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/10)

"Muslims would like the U.S. President to follow up his words with definite moves. The new beginning that he visualizes would have to wait at least till then. His address, which brought out the contribution of the Muslim world to human civilization, could pave the way for fighting 'negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear' that he promised. But to change the mindset could take generations, and for Muslims to respond likewise about America's stereotype in their minds would depend upon how Mr. Obama delivers on the positive indications he gave in his speech.... Hopefully, Mr. Obama's address would set in motion policies that could narrow the divide currently existing between Muslims on the one hand and the United States and the West on the other."

"Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World," an op-ed by Dr. Syed Farooq

Hasnat in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/10)

"In order to dispel global perception of being a bully, the U.S. President emphasized that his country 'is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire.' President Obama represents the real Americans, who are friendlier, liberal and accommodating, which was reflected in his address to the people of the Muslim societies.... In spite of all the nice words that Obama has to say about the Muslims, countries like Pakistan must realize that they have to build themselves and to rely on their own efforts. As well, these societies have to solve their conflicts and problems within themselves, utilizing their societal structures and strengths. The U.S. assistance at this delicate juncture can be helpful."

"Obama's Outreach To Islamic World," an op-ed by Saeed Qureshi in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/10)

"America's confrontation with the Muslims has its seeds in the Israel's conflict with the Palestinian people in which U.S. unconditionally sides with Israel. Perhaps Obama is going to bring a balance into that unjust situation and it would pave way for the fulfillment of Palestinians' aspiration for a state of their own. If that materializes then that would be the day when peace would prevail in the Middle East and U.S. and the Islamic world would go along shoulder to shoulder as sincere friends."

"Obama's Speech: A Rhetoric Or Reality?," an op-ed by Anwar Mahmood Bhatti in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (06/10)

"Obama's in his speech, from an optimist's, on the one hand admitted past mistakes and on the other, unfolded a future roadmap with regard to America's approach towards democracy. And if Mr. Obama is really able to translate his words into reality, one can hope for beginning of a new relationship between the U.S. and the Muslim world. That is the only way through which the U.S. can improve its image, especially in the Muslim countries."

Patterson